

JAN 21 1974

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January 17, 1974

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
Stanford University School of Medicine
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

I am, of course, fully aware of your classic paper (Phys. Rev. 32, 403, 1952) and offer most humble apologies for our oversight in not having quoted it as the source of the term plasmid. In point of fact, I believe I may have been the first, or one of the first, to have used the term in preference to "episome" for bacterial extrachromosomal elements, and I feel I can claim at least some of the responsibility for the current general use of "plasmid" in place of it. I enclose a copy of my first paper in this area where, you will note, I do quote your paper.

May I take this opportunity of asking you whether you agree that the term plasmid should be used to refer to the DNA (or RNA) molecule per se and not to the entire organelle (in those cases where there is an organelle), especially in eukaryotes?

Incidentally, I might add that in confusing me with Aaron Novick you are in the very illustrious company of Edward Teller who did so several years ago at an AAAS meeting when he and I spoke on the same panel.

Sincerely yours,



Richard Novick

RN:ah
Enclosure

Novick, R.